1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
MA11 Kurd MA11

CHAPTER II.

KÛRDISH WOMEN: THEIR FAMILY CEREMONIES.

KÛRDISH maidens are, as a rule, allowed to choose 584
their own husbands, and the practice of courtship is not unknown. The father's consent is necessary, though couples sometimes dispense with it by running 583
away together when, for pecuniary or other reasons, it is withheld. Among the families of the chieftains, however, *mariages de convenance* are usual, and the parties are frequently comparative strangers to each other. The ceremony of betrothal consists of a 584
reception at which refreshments are served. The expression "To drink sherbet"[1] signifies with the [272]
Kûrds to celebrate a betrothal. The bridegroom's presence at this ceremony is not necessary, or even usual, and he is generally represented by a near relative, a brother if he has one, who brings with him the customary presents to the bride and her parents.

The great feature at a Kûrdish wedding is the 535
performance of the *tchopee*, or national dance, of which 585
the women are quite as fond as are the peasants of Macedonia and Bulgaria. During marriage festivities,

[1] This favourite Oriental beverage is made of the juice of fruits, cooled with ice or snow.

1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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many come uninvited, bringing small presents to the bride in order to be able to take part in the *tchopee*. This national dance of the Kūrds is very similar to the Greek *hora*. The performers join hands in a semicircle, and balance their bodies backwards and forwards, marking time, first with one foot and then with the other, accompanying their movements with wild shrieks at intervals. The step is, however, less animated and varied than that of the *hora*, and has been described as "a soft undulating movement of the whole circle in harmony with the music, like a field of corn set in motion by the wind." During its performance, the Kūrdish warrior will affect the most sentimental and romantic expression of countenance, especially when dancing with his sweetheart, which is customary at small gatherings where no strangers are present. On other occasions the men and women dance separately, though the latter even then lay aside their veils, no matter how great the crowd of spectators.

The music to which they dance is chiefly that of the *bilwan*, a kind of reed-flute, several of which are played in unison. Its tones are soft and pleasing, though somewhat monotonous, Kūrdish music being in general, unlike Turkish and Persian, characterised by regular modulations. The airs are, for the most part, grave and melancholy, and would seem to be inspired by sentiments which one would hardly expect to find in the breasts of wild clansmen whose name has become familiar to us only in connection with violence and pillage.

At weddings, the *tchopee* is kept up for hours by

1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
MA11 Kurd MA11

relays of performers, the men dancing first, and then the women. Mr. Rich thus graphically describes the part taken by ladies in this national recreation: 535 585

"The music struck up again the notes of the *tchopee*, and a string of about thirty ladies advanced, hand-in-hand, with slow and graceful steps, resplendent with gold spangles and parti-coloured silks, and without even the pretext of a veil. This was really a beautiful sight, and quite novel to me, who had never in the East seen women, especially ladies, as all of these were, so freely mixing with the men without the slightest affectation of concealment. Even the Arab tribeswomen are more scrupulous. [292]

"The line or string of ladies moved slowly and wavingly round the enclosure, sometimes advancing a step towards the centre, sometimes retiring, balancing their bodies and heads in a very graceful manner. The tune was soft and slow, and none of their movements were in the least abrupt or exaggerated. . . . . This exhibition lasted about half an hour. The music then ceased, and the ladies retired to their homes, first veiling themselves from head to foot, which seemed a rather superfluous precaution, as the crowd which was looking on at the dance far exceeded that which they were at any time likely to meet in the streets of Sulimania." [291]

The Kūrds, being nominally Moslems, the marriage contract is a verbal one, made in the presence of an *imām*. The bridegroom, accompanied by a number of his relatives and friends, comes to the house of the bride's father, and, after the festivities are concluded, takes her home with him on horseback. Sometimes a 585 [293]

1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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K 585 capture of the bride is simulated, though she is in reality purchased by the presents sent at the time of betrothal. But although Moslems, the Kûrds are K 595 practically monogamists, and divorce, though per- 586 mitted, is very rare among them. Their customary oath, "May I divorce my wife if I," &c., well illustrates their unwillingness to avail themselves of this privilege.

Y 595 The Yezidi sect are, however, polygamists, and, 583 like the Turks, may have three wives. Marriages 586 with near relatives, and also with brothers- or sisters-in-law, are common among them, and no objection is K made to divorce as with the Moslem Kûrds. Their Y 585 weddings are performed by Sheikhs of their own creed, 793 the preliminaries being usually settled by the friends of the contracting parties. The ceremony consists of a mutual public declaration in the presence of the priest, who pronounces a blessing on the couple, and it concludes with the bridegroom's giving to the Sheikh a loaf, and receiving in return one of consecrated bread, which he divides with the bride. It is said that, when pronouncing the marriage oath, the bridegroom stands in running water, signifying that he thus washes away the binding nature of the promise, and consequently renders its breach less sinful. The lower Y grades of the sacerdotal order, the *pîrs* and *kawwals*, [793] perform the marriage ceremony for the common people; but the services of the Sheikh Nâzir, or high priest, are sometimes secured by persons of consequence in the community.

K 764 A Kûrdish funeral, although it forms a striking

its imprint the so-called "Hand of Fatima" (referred, almost certainly ex post facto, to the daughter of the Prophet), a symbol found in almost all parts of the Middle East, particularly in amulet jewelry. The same sacrifice is applied to new additions to the house, and, in case a new storey has been built, the throat of the animal is slit over a window sill. It will be seen that when a bride enters her new home, an animal is similarly slaughtered before the threshhold and the maiden's sandal is dipped in its blood. It is an incredible breach of etiquette, if not criminal, to enter a house without announcing oneself, a usage which is supposed to have an origin in the life of the Prophet, and custom demands that the visitor knock and wait outside until ushered in. The door is usually left ajar during the day, but anyone save members of the immediate family are prohibited from entrance until permission is given.

Water flows past the houses in narrow ditches beside the streets, and is conducted to an interior basin by means of a pipe. Every larger house has somewhere, typically in the vestibule of the front door, a huge earthen jar for drinking water with a capacity of twenty or thirty gallons which is filled whenever necessary. This jar, held a few feet off the ground in an iron or wooden frame, has a porous bottom through which the liquid is filtered, dripping slowly into a second receptacle beneath it, and, by reason of evaporation, the filtered water is cooled to

detailed, examination will show. 262

Meat is used in the larger household almost every day. Beef is rare, as is the biryani, a whole roasted lamb stuffed with rice, almonds, raisins, and spices, only appearing on the occasion of great feasts, such as the marriage of a chieftain's daughter. On the other hand, smaller quantities of lamb, mutton, or goat-meat, charcoal broiled on iron skewers (kabab, if diced, and tika, if whole pieces of flesh and fat), are everyday favorites. The same type of meat is also prepared as a stew with the addition of vegetables, and, diced and mixed with rice, used to stuff cucumbers, grape leaves, marrow, and tomatoes which are baked. Chicken and chikaw, the mountain partridge, are generally boiled, and the broth is served as a soup. Eggs are either fried in oil or boiled. Most of this cooking is accompanied with a great quantity of gi, clarified butter or vegetable oil, although in summer the townspeople try to avoid greasy foods. 262 252 [585]

Bread and rice have great importance, some of the latter produced locally, but the better grades imported from Iran. Rice must first be washed to remove dirt and pebbles, while a strong fire is built in the earthen cooking pit. A metal pot is placed over the flames and a quantity of oil and water are added. When this mixture boils, the rice is poured in and the whole is left until most of the liquid has boiled off. When this point is reached, the larger pieces of firewood are removed, and the pot is allowed to

of generosity. Commoners are not in a position to quarrel with a chieftain, and the problem was usually solved in this way. The youth was summoned and kissed the hand of his reluctant father-in-law, addressing him as a parent. If, however, the fugitive couple belonged to aristocratic houses, the most sanguine of vendettas could follow. 622 628 584

The integrity of its women is perhaps the primary facet of a family's honor. If a Kurd insults anything other than the women of his opponent, he is in danger of being slain himself. If, however, he seriously questions the honor of a woman, the latter must be killed by her relatives, never the accuser. The accusation is thus extremely dangerous, and, although it is sometimes heard in joking exchanges, a serious enunciation cannot be taken lightly. The honor of a man depends very much on that of his female relatives, and the primary rule in this second regard is that no woman, unmarried or married, can have unseemly traffic, specifically intercourse, with any other person than her husband. If a bride cannot demonstrate her virginity, she can be returned to her relatives who are obligated to slay her, although she is not thus sent to them in every case. Similarly, if there is an accusation of adultery, a wife can be directed to the same fate. The woman, it might be said, is always the offender. It follows that if a woman errs in this way and is detected, she must flee, either to a chieftain or 577 562 554 [684] [585] 684 562

he asks the same question of the youth. When the youth consents, the mulla requires the maiden's father or deputy to repeat a formula in which he formally gives the girl in marriage. Taking up a pen, he then supplies, with some flourish, the names of the parties concerned and the sums of the dowry on the contract, and the document is signed by himself, the two witnesses, the youth, and the father of the girl. The ceremony is completed by further recitation from the Quran by the mulla and mutual congratulations. The youth usually kisses the hands of the mulla, his new father-in-law, and the witnesses. 584

The festivities of the betrothal are small in comparison with those of the wedding. There are banquets at the homes of the parents, and perhaps some dancing and music, but these only demand part of a day. The muqqadam, the primary fraction of the dowry, is typically paid to the father of the maiden by one of the male relatives of the suitor when the contract is signed. At the same time, the mother of the youth sends an expensive gift of jewelry, bracelets and earrings, to the girl. The period between the betrothal and the wedding varies, from several weeks to a year, and the two persons engaged are permitted great freedom in their relations. If the youth can meet secretly with his fiancée, he may kiss her and present her with a ring, a plain piece of jewelry, sometimes setting a stone or cut glass, usually worn on a finger of the right hand. Some men wear such rings themselves. At the same time, most 585 [583] 584

girls exhibit shyness and what may be described as willfulness in their behavior. "If the young man is a guest at her house and asks her for a glass of water, she may refuse him and the other people will laugh." Both boy and girl are embarrassed by a certain amount of joking by their elders and companions, and chafing a young man about his coming wedding is a common form of amusement. During this period, the girl's father is expected to have doubled the sum of the muqaadan from his own resources, and it is expended on the clothing, household needs, and jewelry of the prospective bride. Both houses are scenes of intense activity in preparation for the wedding.

When a day has been selected for the wedding celebration, one of the elder men of the youth's family makes a tour of the town, inviting relatives and friends of his household. A similar invitation is issued by the father and brothers of the maiden. Those invited send many gifts of food to the two houses. On the forenoon of the wedding, the mother and sisters of the bride bathe and dress her carefully, rebraiding her hair and staining her hands with henna. Members of her family take presents of henna to the townspeople with which the recipients paint their fingers. One can always recognize a wedding-guest for some weeks afterward by such marks. At the two houses, those of the bridegroom and the bride, parties of guests assemble, and refreshments and banquets are given throughout the day, the brother or most intimate friend of the youth receiving the

people and supervising the entertainment. A party of men is assembled at the home of the bridegroom, and the bridegroom himself is seated on a horse. This group, leading the animal, makes its way through the town, accompanied by shouting, music, and the noise of rifles fired in the air. Arriving at the house of the maiden, the bridegroom dismounts and is led inside with his followers to be offered food and drink. A second group, made up of the bride and her female relatives and friends, is formed, and the bride also mounts an extravagantly caparisoned horse. A more striking procession now begins, headed by the bridegroom and his men. Following these are the bride, her relatives and friends, and the rear is brought up by donkeys and porters carrying the new household goods, clothing, and other treasures in brightly painted chests. The Kurds take great delight in discharging firearms on such occasions, and permission for this must be obtained from the government. When the bride of a chieftain was taken by automobile to Batas from Rowanduz, several thousand rounds were fired in the air along the route. The bridegroom arrives at his parental home before the bride, and takes up a station on the roof or balcony, furnished with a tray filled with grain, coins, and candy. When the bride is led up on her horse, he showers the contents of this tray over her and her women. As she dismounts, a sheep is slaughtered before the door of the house and her shoe is dipped in its blood before she can enter.

585 [492] [411] [656]

The consummation of the marriage is usually deferred

until nightfall, and the time intervening is occupied by feasting and dancing. The wedding-dance is the sha'i, a round dance performed by a circle of men and women, sometimes including the bride or bridegroom, holding each other by the shoulders, with musicians playing the small drum, tambourine, and the wooden flute in the center. The wedding-guests have sent offerings of food, and the father of the youth in return favors them with gifts of handkerchiefs, turbans, and other articles of clothing. Most of the women, in the presence of so many male relatives, are unveiled, although a few remain indoors. The bride is carefully dressed in bright materials, and wears a white headcloth which can be drawn across the face as a veil. Kurdish chieftains attend weddings in their districts, whether of Muslims or Nestorian Christians, and enjoy themselves sitting on horseback, watching the festivities and firing their weapons. They lend color and prestige to the celebration, and are welcome visitors. Government officials, in contrast, are rarely encountered at such an event. When the bride and bridegroom are ready to retire, the latter is equipped with a present, a coin or a piece of jewelry. At the door of their room, an old woman of the house, often a servant, waits with a glass of water or sherbet. The bride drinks half of this, and her husband the remainder, giving the old woman the present in exchange. Alone together, the bride is expected, in an almost ritualized fashion, to repulse her husband's

585 ● [535] [534] [431] [292] [431] [272]

initial advance, and he must slap her or draw his knife with a threatening gesture. This done, sometimes seriously, the couple may retire to their bed. 585

The virginity of a maiden must be attested, and from the white undergarments and bedding the maid who makes up the room in the morning is able to report on her "virtue," for the only test is the blood of the hymen. Occasionally the youth will smear a handkerchief with this blood and present it to his mother. In either case, the mother kisses the girl on the forehead and praises her for her chastity. The stained handkerchief, accompanied by an expensive gift, may be sent to the mother of the girl. If no blood is in evidence, a suspicious husband can return the girl to her father's house, and her relatives are more or less obligated to kill her. If, however, the youth's father is "pious," he requests his son to pardon the girl and to say nothing. After the bride has remained for seven days, a delegation of women from her father's house escorts her to her old home for a visit of several days. Her husband comes to take her a second time, on this occasion with no ceremony, and exchanges gifts with his father-in-law at this meeting. The feasting and dances which accompany the wedding can endure for a week or more, but most townspeople consider two or three days sufficient. The marriages of the poor are conducted with less ostentation, although relatively high sums may be expended, and those of the Kurdish aristocracy with the greatest display, the slaughter of dozens of animals [586] [627] [684]

and delegations of guests from all parts of Kurdish Iraq. 585 ●
When a woman, divorced or widowed, is married a second 587
time, the festivities are meager compared with those
described above, confined to informal banquets for the two
households concerned.

Divorce, like inheritance and betrothal, is a matter 586
of religious and civil law, and the townspeople and the [671]
Kurds in general, inasmuch as they seem to follow no customs
which contravene the code, have nothing to do with these
formulations. For a man, divorce is a simple proceeding
in Muslim Iraq, for he need only come into the presence of
the judge or the mulla or priest, with two witnesses, and
subscribe to one of the several formulae, of which the
simplest is saying, in Kurdish, to his wife, tallagum
bo dayt (the verb from Arabic tallaqa, "to divorce,"),
"I divorce you." According to Islamic prescription, a
husband can divorce his wife twice in this fashion and
each time take her back, but the third recitation is
absolutely binding. Only if the woman marries a third [587]
party and is subsequently divorced by him can she rejoin
her first spouse in another marriage. If a man wishes to
make the divorce final on the first occasion, he repeats
the formula three times. Of the minor separations, those
of the first or second occasions, there are two types.
In the first of these the woman asks no compensation, and
the divorce admits of easy reunion. In the second, the
woman demands and is paid the mu'akhar, that part of the

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Fig. 41. European wedding dress (cf. p. 71/73). Educated urban environment, Bukkuwati.

[838]

and night dress were obtained. To a bride's outfit in an educated milieu belonged a satin house coat and a nightgown intended solely for use at night, which presupposes sunbathing. In this milieu were also found brassières and even artificial breasts of foam rubber, plus European type panties, though these were made at home out of highly-coloured cotton material.

The following is typical of the educated urban environment:

The upper garments connected with bikini are the most important dress elements. The Kwakiutl elements are retained but are only used now and again. Dresses are degenerating in regard to material, and also appeared to be in course of dissolution in regard to their composition. Shoulders has been abolished and the belt introduced. Of European elements both blouse and skirt have been adopted, plus summer and wedding dresses. In one instance I saw in Bukkuwati a short European shoulder-less part of the calico is twisted together and placed like a bandle over the bikini. This way of carrying it,

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Hurd MA11

can be attached to what this young man said, so I prefer to stick to the facts available about his immediate 582
family. In the humble village environment (Tamarrut) I came across three examples of brides having 582
been brought from Sekhmani as they gave prestige to the village. In the educated milieu, on the other hand, I met a strongly-expressed wish to be linked by marriage with good, prominent families.

Difference in the position of man and woman when contracting marriage. None of the brides in 585
Kardiman whom I had an opportunity to observe appeared as radiant as we are accustomed to see in our cultures. The Kurdish brides either looked remarkably unaffected or else directly resentful. My interpreter's sister, whose wedding preparations and later wedding I witnessed, went about in the days prior to the wedding extremely unkempt and with an attitude of complete indifference. In reply to my question my interpreter told me that it is not the custom for brides to take any part in the preparations, and that out of regard for her future family no impression must be given of exploiting the working capacity of the young woman; in addition, the bride-to-be must not suggest, by paying too much attention to her appearance, that she is interested in being married.

In her study of weddings and marriages in Palestine, Granqvist probably provides an explanation applicable also to the Kurds, for she says[1] that it is the bridegroom who is happy, and with him his family and friends. Happiness prevails in the home of the bridegroom, the house of the wedding. A bride, on the other hand must herself her fate. Is she not to leave her family home, and will not this home lose a member? Besides, Granqvist points out, it is considered highly unbecoming for a bride to evince happiness.

When, on the other hand, the marriage negotiations began in the case of my interpreter's brother and the wedding arrangements were being discussed, it was planned as a joyous festival, the house next door being borrowed and a dance arranged in its large courtyard. A later letter, dated 23rd August 1938, told me that 600 people were invited to the wedding, and that the dance had lasted from morning to night. As an unmarried son, his accommodation in the home was confined to a mattress which he [554]
spread out with the rest of the family, plus a niche behind a mirror for his few effects; his pyjamas (leisure and sleeping garment) lay, when not in use, rolled up on a chair in the guest reception room, which he also used for changing. In a word, he had had only a minimum of room at his disposal. When he married he and his wife would be allotted to their sole use one of the house's three living rooms. He and his wife, at all events initially, would form a cell within the family with a claim to space and a private life—a notable improvement of his position in the home.

Marriage policy and marriage negotiations. "Many families have wanted me", was my interpreter's 584
reply to my question as to what possibilities she had had to be married. In other words she could boast of the fact that many families had applied to her[2] regarding the instigation of the marriage negotiations so essential a preliminary to a marriage in a Muslim area, where the world of men and women is divided, and a young man meets no women other than his nearest relations with whom marriage is precluded.

In the family home of my interpreter at Sekhmani I had an opportunity of watching at close quarters the marriage negotiations conducted by the young man's family with that of a possible candidate.

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

584 369 family select the prospective bride, also when the first choice is dropped, as mentioned above. It is the women who conduct the preliminary negotiations[82], which are concluded by a meeting between the men of the two families implicated.

[671] The girl can refuse to agree to the union, but this, I was told, is regarded as a great insult. According to the law the father and grandfather have as *wali* the right to marry off a minor daughter or granddaughter without obtaining her permission[83].

562, 584 In the meantime a Kurdish girl can oppose the concept of marriage itself. My interpreter, an extremely intelligent girl, hoped to be able to continue her education abroad, a thing the city authorities persisted in holding out as a possibility, and therefore did not wish to marry for the time being. I did not come across any example of a father or mother forcing a daughter into marriage. There was, on the other hand, a case where a father had forced a young son to marry a girl fifteen years older. To avoid this forced marriage the young man fled to the mountains, but in vain. The father got his way. Whilst in Kurdistan I met the woman in question and the fruits of the marriage, a little girl; the husband I only saw at a distance.

582 In regard to the age at which marriage is contracted, there is the case of my interpreter's half-sister, who became a bride at the age of twelve. Asked if she could consider being married, she remained silent[84]. I was told that she had been big and strong for her age. Her two children had been born when she was 16 and 18, and she and they looked quite healthy and sound. In Halabja I lived in a home where the then 25 year old wife had been married at the age of 11, her husband then having been 25[85]. Her first child was born 6–7 years after the marriage. It was said that in the districts around Tawella, to which many families moved out for most of the summer on account of the work in the mulberry plantations there, and adolescent boys and girls picked fruit together, that, failing the protection afforded to their virginity by a home, it was common for girls to be married before reaching puberty. In Balkha brides of 11–12 were mentioned. Here the reason for the early entry into the married state was said to be the shortage of adult women, but it was also averred that the first child was not born for 6–7 years after the wedding. Maternity before the girl is full-grown, as met with in India, does not therefore, appear to be usual in Southern Kurdistan.

[221] It might be expected that a girl of 11 or 12 would as a housewife be little use to a man, but my interpreter told me that a girl of this age—to us but a child—although completely uneducated and illiterate, was on the other hand domestically accomplished and fully aware of the behaviour expected of her in her new home. In consequence no major difficulties existed. As a parallel to this we have what Kaberry[86] says about the conditions of the Australian aborigines. Here a child bride of 9–11 is fully trained in the pattern of behaviour expected of her, has some sexual knowledge, is prepared for her wifely duties, and therefore cannot in any way be compared with a European schoolgirl of a similar age.

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585 [191] *The marriage contract.* A church or civil wedding is the main feature of a marriage contracted in the West, and conditions in the event of divorce, death of the spouse, and the wife's economic position during marriage are not laid down at that time. The drawing up of a marriage settlement and separate estate are still not regarded as really good form, and, despite the large percentage, divorce is not taken into consideration. Questions of inheritance are also arranged later, if at all.

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

Within Islam the contraction of marriage is signalised by two things: the drawing up of a marriage settlement and the wedding festivities. 585

The drawing up of a marriage settlement is, as Levy points out[97], the main—I am tempted to say the basic—feature of a contracted marriage. According to what my interpreter told me, a marriage settlement drawn up by Kurds in the urban milieu of Sulaimani demands the presence of four male members of the bride's family, the most important of whom is the bride's guardian, as a rule her father. Four male members of the prospective bridegroom's family, that is to say the groom and three others, must also be present. There is also a *mulla* and the *qādī* by whom the marriage settlement is drawn up[98]. My interpreter informed me that the prospective bride might also be present, though closely-veiled and in a somewhat passive role. Whereas the bridegroom thus has no opportunity of seeing the bride until the marriage is consummated, the bride apparently is afforded a chance of seeing her future husband. I was also told that on this occasion she is asked whether she agrees and that it is then open to her to refuse to go on with the marriage, her father being unable to force her. According to the *shafi'i* rite the bride must agree to the marriage[99]. The marriage settlement is not concluded between the bride and bridegroom, but between the bride's *wali* and the bridegroom with the others present as witnesses[100]. The bridegroom agrees to pay the bride price, its size is finally fixed, and with it the decisive point: how great a part of it is to be immediately available, before the wedding, and how much is to be held back for payment in the event of a divorce, that is to say if a man repudiates his wife (a right not shared by the latter), or in case of the husband's demise. When my interpreter's sister contracted marriage, I was told that the sum set aside for the contingency of divorce or widowhood was not, as normally[101], a half or a third, but if I understood aright—nearly four times the sum paid out. 1500 Din. = £1500. The paid up part of the bride price was 400 Din. = £400. This large sum my interpreter's family demanded guaranteed to assure the sister's marital position and to prevent any repudiation in the event of another wife[102]. I cannot say whether the sum was made larger than in fact it was in order to add prestige to the family's economic reputation. 585 369

With the drawing up of the marriage settlement the man, in addition to paying out the bride price, undertakes to support his wife, give her food, clothes, and attendance commensurate with the standard obtaining in her family home[103]. A breach of this marriage settlement gives the wife grounds for divorce. The other possibility a woman has to obtain divorce is the re-payment of the bride price. Apart from these instances the right to dissolve marriage lies with the man, who utters three times the word *talāq*, "I repudiate thee", or better, in Juynboll's[104] translation: "I renounce all rights over thee", as in some cases when drawing up the marriage settlement certain clauses, *ta'līq*, can be inserted or attached so that definite lapses or positive actions on his part nullify his rights over the wife, thus providing her with one more possibility to obtain a divorce. On contracting marriage the wife undertakes to bear the husband children who belong to the husband, also in the event of divorce. Here it is true, the woman takes the children with her so long as they are quite small, but is obliged to send them back to the father's home when the boys are six and the girls eight years old. 585 586

As mentioned, the drawing up of the marriage settlement takes place at the *qādī*, the judge. (It was stated that in the villages only the local *mulla* was necessary). This has caused Ostrup[105] to declare that the drawing up of a marriage settlement is a civil act, advancing as proof of this assertion that 585 114 [693]

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

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the deed is drawn up at the judge's residence and not in a mosque, which is a place of prayer and not (like Christian churches) a form of registration office. The same view is to be found in Blackman[106], who says that among Muslims no religious ceremony takes place—marriage is not a sacrament. Levy also states that "in Islām marriage is a secular contract and not a religious rite"[107]. This is not in accord with Kurdish conditions. That the drawing up of a marriage settlement here seems to be covered by religious precepts seems to be indicated by, for example, the presence of the *mulla*. According to Juynboll[108] matrimonial law and the rights of inheritance are generally considered more or less connected with religion, and within the dual legal system, spiritual and temporal, matrimonial and family rights fall to the spiritual judge. Islam is more than a religion, it is a whole system comprising all aspects of human life[109]. It would be highly remarkable if the drawing up of the marriage settlement should be a temporal act in view of the fact that the justification for the paying of a bride price is found in the Corsn[110]. Rather can it be said that the drawing up of a marriage settlement within the *shāfi'i* rite of Islām, which the Kurds follow, is an act connected with religion. What on the other hand is distinct from the drawing up of the marriage settlement is the consummation of the marriage, which failing a better expression, what can be termed "the wedding". It has nothing to do either with the secular or spiritual authorities, being a purely private affair that sooner or later, often years after the drawing up of the marriage settlement, takes place in the form of a family festival with friends. This occasion, as opposed to the drawing up of the marriage settlement, can be said to be a secular, and particularly a quite private, action.

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584 369

The social intercourse of engaged couples in the event of prospective spouses knowing each other.

In the educated urban milieu of Sulaimani I met one example of a couple who knew each other before marriage and had themselves chosen each other. This, of course, is the exception and was due entirely to their milieu.

The girl in the case was the 23 year old sister of my interpreter. Both she and the young man in question were primary schoolteachers who had met as colleagues and fallen in love. When the young man realised his interest in the girl he had applied to my interpreter, also a schoolteacher, as his family lived outside in one of the village areas from which no woman, mother or sister, was able to act as go-between. He told her that "he would like to be admitted to her family", and asked if she would act as his advocate and place the matter before her father. This had been done and the marriage settlement had been drawn up a year before my stay in Kurdistan. The wedding festival was imminent and took place whilst I lived with the family. In the months prior to the wedding I was able to study the pattern of behaviour applying to former colleagues now engaged, and the position of the prospective groom in the family he was to enter.

By the marriage settlement the young man became a member of the family to such an extent that he was able, with her 13 year old half-brother, to accompany my interpreter to the village of Topzawa where she was to live with me in the sheikh's house. The night he spent there in order to act as an important escort and to investigate whether conditions there were sufficiently re-assuring, he was able to sleep in the same room as her half-brother and herself. My interpreter explained that she might

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583 114 369 does not mention that the man must pay any bride price. Nor does it quite agree with the information Lane gives about urban conditions among Arabs in Egypt, where he lets the wedding expenses of the bride's family equal the sum paid in bride wealth by the bridegroom, but states that the money expended by the former goes on furniture, clothes and trinkets for the bride, and that all this, called "gahaz", is the bride's personal property, taken with her in the event of divorce[121], whereas he makes no mention of the bride's family presenting any form of gift to the bridegroom and his family.

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585 291 *Wedding preparations.* Of the bride's outfit the satin quilt and the quilted coats are made by male craftsmen in the bazar. On the other hand a seamstress came to the home where, under the supervision of the women in the family, she cuts out kirtles, long baggy trousers and jackets from the silk, muslin and brocade purchased in Baghdad and Sulaimani. When the material was cut out, the bride's step-mother, thus a married woman, brought a large piece of loaf sugar which, with a sugar hammer, was smashed and strewn over the material. This was said to bring good luck. [MM]

The same seamstress cut out of a roll of English greys the shirts of genuine Kurdish form and the drawers given by the bride's family to male relatives of the bridegroom. The seamstress then rolled the pieces of material together, and left to sew them in her own home.

585 302 515 The day before the wedding in my interpreter's home at Sulaimani a woman arrived in order to remove all superfluous hair from the bride's body, whilst the bride herself removed the pubic hairs during a triple steam bath in the house's bathroom. Whereas an unmarried Kurdish girls, as with the Arabs, never shaves or removes hair from her body in other ways, she must from the time of marriage keep her body free of hair[122]. Hairs are plucked out or removed by smearing on a paste, the composition of which I was unable to discover. Dickson mentions a depilatory of this kind with the Badawi, a solution of zinc and arsenic[123] used by the well-to-do, whilst other women pluck out the hair with their fingers. Lane states that in Egypt women use a kind of resin called "libán shámee", which is smeared on in a melted state, whereas other women pluck the hairs out "after merely rubbing the part with ashes of charcoal"[124]. At another place Lane[125] refers to a depilatory, "noorah", composed of quicklime mixed with about one eight part of orpiment. This powder is stirred in water to a paste that is smeared on, loosening the hairs in two minutes, after which it is washed off.

[305] This removal of hair in my interpreter's family thus took place in the home with the help of an expert, and not, as reported by Granqvist about the Palestinian Arabs, in the public bath[126]. It was said that the bridegroom went through a similar process[127].

585 291 197 In the bride's home this form of beauty treatment in connexion with the marriage was of great interest to all the women there. This went so far that an aunt of the bride grasped her by the legs as she sat tailor-fashion in the courtyard, and attempted to overturn her in order to satisfy herself that the pubic hairs had been duly removed. It was possible to determine this as the bride that evening was not wearing Kurdish woman's costume with wide baggy trousers, but a long, pink nightgown with puffed sleeves—a European phenomenon adopted into the Kurdish dress scheme, worn with a little jacket but without long trousers. Apart from this episode, which must be considered an indication of the extent to which a wedding, down to the last detail, is a family and not a private affair, Kurds 834

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were exceedingly modest. Modesty, on the other hand, was of a type different from what we are accustomed to in our pattern of behaviour.

They felt dislike at displaying the naked body. All changing of clothes during the day among women took place in a squatting position without the body at any time being uncovered. An sleeveless European summer dress in which the daughter of the Sheikh of Topzawa had wanted to be photographed caused her to break off the sitting and to dash into the dark cookhouse in the courtyard, where she sat hunched up in the corner with her naked arms slung protectively around her bare legs, when two peasant women from the village, fetching water, happened to pass the gate to the courtyard. In the urban milieu, when my interpreter and I took a steam bath together in the bathroom, she always kept her hand covering her lap when the sitting position on the small wooden stools whilst being doused was not sufficiently concealing.

On the other hand shyness did not apply when relieving nature. This took place collectively and in the presence of other women fetching water from the basin, where water was available for the subsequent washing, whether in the garden basin of the sheikh's houses at Topzawa and Serkan, at the more private well-like shaft in the courtyard of the Sheikh's house at Sargalu, or at one of the big public washing basins for women in the villages. This was done discretely sheltered by the ampleness of women's costumes, but was not a private but a joint undertaking, in which solitude and peace was neither sought nor expected.

The wedding. Lane[128] says that Arabs have a special preference for Mondays and Fridays for the celebration of weddings—that is to say the day on which the bride is handed over to the bridegroom—whereas, according to Hangi[129], the Turk-stamped Bosnian Muslims favour Sundays and Thursdays.

To judge by the four wedding feasts I had an opportunity of witnessing, wholly or in part, in Southern Kurdistan, the Kurds appear to follow the Turks in this matter. In the villages the two weddings took place on Sundays (16 June and 14 July, 1957), the third on a Wednesday (22 May, 1957), whilst the one wedding I was present at at Sulaimani was celebrated on a Thursday (8 August, 1957). Later my interpreter informed me by letter of her brother's wedding, which took place on a Monday (25 August, 1958). No rule can be discerned from such sparse material, merely the negative one that the Arab predilection for Friday—the most important day of the week for Islam—as the day for the handing over of the bride does not apply in the case of the Kurds. The weddings I witnessed in Topzawa and its neighbouring village, Rakawa, took place in a humble village milieu. The upper class village milieu wedding was not celebrated during my stay in Southern Kurdistan.

At two of the three village weddings I was able to observe the men's role in the festivities, at the third the women's. In all three cases, however, I was in the bridegroom's home to which the bride was brought. In none of the cases did I have an opportunity to see what went on in the bride's home.

The fetching of the brides, *bût*, who all came from outside, was a matter for the men[130]. At 6 in the morning a cortège of hired cars filled with men left the village for the bride's residence. Among the men, most of those in the village, was the bridegroom's father, but not the bridegroom, *zâwâ*.

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With one or two other young men and relatives he awaited the arrival of the bride at his family house which in future was also to be her's. Although these weddings were celebrated by peasants, a representative of the sheikh's house, either himself or his son, took part in the fetching of the bride. On the return to the village, the cortège now comprised a car containing the bride accompanied by two women: a female relative who must not be the mother[131], and the woman who later should return to the bride's family with the bridal sheet and its evidence of the bride's virginity. At another wedding, which took place at Rakawa to which cars could not reach, the bride was carried the last stretch by a white mare accompanied by women on foot. That the horse was a mare was to promote childbearing. On arrival at the house the bride and her companions are led in, their arrival being awaited by the female guests, whilst the men assemble on the clay roof of the house or on that of a neighbour, where carpets are spread out, ones own and borrowed, and the festive meal is partaken. The law requires that all invited to this meal must attend unless there is valid reason for not doing so. On the other hand the host—in this case the father of the bridegroom—must ensure that the meal takes place in accordance with Islamic law[132]. The meal is prepared by the women but served by men for other men. Men also attend to the samovar and serve tea[133]. No woman lets herself be seen by the men. The festivities for the two groups take place in strict segregation. When the meal is over, the men's dance begins on a small, uneven ground between the houses. The wedding festivities never lasted for more than one day.

The men's dance is a chain dance, in which, standing side by side, they take each other's hands and at the same time place their forearm round that of the other man so that they stand shoulder to shoulder. The outside man of the chain waves a cloth in his raised free hand. The chain forms a semicircle, and the steps take place radially, in towards the centre and out again, whilst the men in the semicircle slowly move sideways. This dance resembles the Yugoslav Kolo, danced in the Balkans, a resemblance also pointed out by Wilson[134]. The same chain dance is reported from the Lurs in Iran[135] and from the Bakhtiari[136], where its similarity to the Greek Arnaoutika is pointed out. However, both in Yugoslavia and in Iran the men appear during the dance to hold each other by the belt, whereas the Kurds hold each other firmly by the hand.

The accompanying music is produced by a drummer and a clarinettist, whilst a third person in this group of itinerant musicians collected money thrown to him by the spectators which he kept in a cloth stuck up under his waistband. The drum[137] hung on a cord round the drummer's neck and was played with two drumsticks, one of which was a thin, straight baton, the other a thicker, flat stick bent at the end. They were used on each side of the drum, and after use were stuck together. The clarinet[138] had a funnel-shaped head, and when not in use was split into two pieces which were fitted into each other and placed in the waistband. These musicians arrived some days before the wedding was to take place and played to the men of the village in the small village tea house, in the afternoon and evening when the men danced the chain dance for hours in the light of two borrowed pressure lamps. The monotonous rhythm of the dance was stimulating, and ended in Topuwa one evening with accentuating revolver shots fired by the sheikh's son with an American or European revolver of which the house possessed three or four. There was less interval between tones than in European music, seventeen tones being used instead of our twelve. There was no polyphony or

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Fig. 92. Wedding dance. Men dance in a row to the music of a drum and a clarinet. Rakawa.

harmonization, so, as Ølstrup[139] points out, this music to us sounds flat and false. Other instruments include a 20–30 cm. long shepherd's pipe, both single and double (E. 2280–81), referred to by Hay[140], one of which I acquired though I did not hear it played.

To sum up: At a village wedding among peasants the men's rôle comprises fetching the bride at daybreak, about 6 a.m. accompanying her to the bridegroom's home and participation in the festive meal there. (At the one wedding in Rakawa it was said that 300 men were fed simultaneously.) Then a chain dance which, ending at about 4 p.m. is a sign that the festival is over, whereafter the men go home. In addition to the bride price paid by the bridegroom, his parents must, in the villages, pay for the cars used to fetch the bride and for the wedding meal and dance.

The women's part runs parallel to the men's without the two groups having any contact with each other. The women invited to the party assembled in the bridegroom's home some hours before the men's cortège, including the bride's car, could be expected to come into sight on the narrow mountain track leading to the village. At the wedding I witnessed, the women were given the three-walled central room on the first floor that opened out on to the clay roof covering the entrance hall to the house,

585 from which clay stairs, with high, uneven steps, led up. From the back wall of the room there was access to two smaller apartments, the one of which was to be the bridal chamber. Mattresses to sit on were spread out along the back wall for the reception of the bride, and under them was placed a lump of honey wrapped in a bread "pancake". It was stated that this should assure the gentleness and sweetness of the bride. Naturally, the women brought with them their children of all ages so the room was full to overflowing. The places of honour for the sheikh's wife and daughter were on the mattresses lining the back wall. Entertainment during the wait consisted of cigarettes of Kurdish tobacco and very sweet tea served by the youngest of the women present, a girl of about 13. Into this feminine milieu, where the hostess was the bridegroom's mother[141], came, when the car cortège was sighted, the bridegroom and one or two male relatives who, like him, had not participated in the fetching of the bride. They helped him to smooth a stick about 2 metres long with which he took up his stand on the edge of the roof just above the entrance door, surrounded by the women, who had stood up and gone across the roof to him. Sweetmeats were passed round among the women; a fowl was held ready by a woman standing at the side of the bridegroom. When the bride was taken out of the bridal car she was led towards the house, supported by her two female companions, the aunt and the midwife from her own home. Like the other brides brought to the village she had over her turban a reddish-yellow, transparent gauze veil hanging down over her face[142], reddish-yellow was also the predominant colour of her dress[143], which despite the great heat consisted of so many layers of clothing that she had difficulty in moving. The costume was without belt, but this was no exception as women often went without belts. It had therefore hardly the significance mentioned by Granqvist in the case of the Palestinian Arabs: that the absence of the belt was to make her prolific[144]. As the bride approached the entrance to the house and was about to cross the threshold, the fowl was released and flew over her beating its wings; at the same time the bridegroom lifted the heavy stick, which he held in both hands, and gave her a powerful blow on the crown of the head. He and the other young men thereupon disappeared from the women's group and were not seen again as long as the guests stayed in the house. The bride was helped up the stairs by her two women companions, led across the room and given a seat on a mattress. The mother of the bridegroom bade her welcome by bending over her and placing her head first against her right, and then against her left, shoulder[145], whereafter the bride's reddish-yellow veil was raised and the women pressed around her in order to see the new member of the village community. It was stated that this bride and bridegroom had never seen each other before the wedding, and the only contact they had had so far was the blow given by the groom to his bride on her arrival at her future home. The bride's trousseaux, purchased with the bride price, in this case supplemented by dresses given by the family, was carried up the stairs after her. The bridal chest (E. 2278) with a painted glass front, containing the rolled-up mattresses stuffed with cotton that were to comprise the marriage bed, and the unavoidable battery-operated wireless set, were carried into the room that was to serve as the bridal chamber.

The bride was tattooed on the back of the hand with three dots at the base of the little finger. Her finger tips were stained with henna as were also the palms, the latter being painted with a sun, a crescent moon and a star. She wore stockings, a thing I otherwise only saw among Turkish women in Mosul, so it was not possible to know whether her feet also were henna-stained.

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Of the two women who had accompanied the bride, the aunt was to stay in the new home with her for a week; the other woman was to keep guard outside the bridal chamber and return to Sulaimani, whence the bride was come, the following morning taking with her the bridal sheet with the proof of the bride's virginity[146]. It was said that if the bride proved not to be a virgin, she would be killed by one of her own male relatives.

A festive meal similar to that served to the men was partaken of by the women. This was carried in on large, common eating trays. The women ate first and then the children. When the meal was over the women guests departed.

The women's rôle in the village milieu thus comprises the reception and welcome of the bride, and the witnessing of certain ceremonies when the bridegroom first meets his bride. These ceremonies include the release of a fowl over the bride and a blow on the head delivered by the groom. The women's rôle then includes a common meal that ends the festivities. The bride's mother-in-law bids her welcome, though the bride's mother does not accompany her daughter when she leaves the home and has no part in the reception of the bride and her handing over to the bridegroom. In her place is a female relative and the woman who is to bring back evidence of the bride's virginity.

In regard to the fowl released over the bride's head, it was said that earlier the bird was killed, but now they just let is loose. In this connexion it may be of interest that Granqvist reports about the Arabs in Palestine that at some places an animal is sacrificed[147] when the bridal couple enters the bridegroom's house.

Granqvist also mentions that according to Arab custom, entry into a house is always an important matter, as all kinds of spirits, demons, *jinns* and so forth attempt to slip in, too, and naturally a bride's first entry into her new home is a specially delicate affair[148]. In regard to Islamised Turks in Chinese and Russian Turkestan, Krohn calls attention to the remains of Shamanism and ancestral worship, and refers to the precautionary measures connected with the entrance of the bride into the husband's family. Quoting Grenard, Krohn writes: "Es handelt sich sich danach nur um Massnahmen, die Frau aus ihrem Sippenkultverband auszulösen und in einen neuen, den der Sippe des Mannes, aufzunehmen"[149]. In my opinion this ceremony falls under "Rites de passage"[150]; the blow I witnessed is given with enormous gravity and thoroughness by the bridegroom to the still unknown young woman, whilst his male relatives afford him symbolical support by ranging themselves alongside him and in helping him to smoothe the heavy stick.

The bride knew what was awaiting her when, supported by her two companions she approached the entrance door to the house. Everybody appeared to be taking part in an act of the utmost seriousness, an act that to the regret of bride and bridegroom might result in a fractured skull but which they had no possibility of avoiding, an act not performed before the male group but the assembled women's group. Krohn's analysis can probably be accepted: that it is here a matter of a ceremony, the purpose of which is to release the bride from her own family and to accept her in the man's, as she crosses the threshold of her future home and before the first sexual intercourse takes place. Granqvist refers to the fact that in Palestine the bridegroom gives his bride three blows on the hand which she places on the door before entering her future home. In notes, Granqvist quotes a number of statements by other writers in support of the contention that the blows are a symbolic act that are to assure

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585 [082] [177] that the husband will have the future mastery in the home[131], an explanation I did not hear given for the blow suffered by the Kurdish bride, and one I am personally reluctant to accept. Both in regard to the symbolic sacrifice of the fowl and the blow given by the groom to the bride, we have a feature of pre-Islamic culture. As Nikitine points out, the Kurds possess a culture layer older than Islam, which becomes evident at the most important events in life: birth, marriage and burial[132].

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585 369 In urban circles in Sulaimani I had an opportunity to follow the bride's last day in her old home before she was handed over to the bridegroom in the afternoon, a wedding viewed from the opposite angle to that last described. Even though, as opposed to the weddings I witnessed in the villages, this took place in an educated milieu, it will be possible to point both to resemblances and divergencies in the course of the wedding that can have a common value across the borders dividing the several environments.

At this wedding the family's own men, that is to say the bride's male relatives, left the home early in the morning and did not reappear until late in the evening. It was said that they spent the day in company with the bridegroom in a small two-roomed town house that had been rented and furnished for the young couple, as the bridegroom's family home lay far from Sulaimani, and the two people most concerned, who both belonged to the educated milieu, wanted some months later to seek positions as school teachers in one of the villages where it was apparently intended to begin educating girls also. The effects acquired with the bride price were brought to the future home of the couple some days before the wedding. The day before the wedding this house was put in order by the women of the bride's family, assisted by girl friends. The bride had not been present when the house was taken, only the bride's sister and the bridegroom. It was to act as a substitute for his family home, the place where the bride was to be received and the marriage consummated. The similarity was further increased by the fact that it was in the courtyard and loggia of this quite small house that the groom's visiting female relatives lodged. However, the picture was spoiled to some extent because the arrangement of the two rooms and loggia was done under the firm direction of the bride's sister to such an extent that she locked the three arranged rooms: the bed-room, the guest reception room and the small windowless store room, in order to stop the children brought by the bridegroom's family, who were all over the place, from upsetting the arrangement. Still her behaviour looked rather like a demonstration of the superiority of the urban cultural milieu over that of the visiting village aristocracy. As many of the ladies of Sulaimani as the bride's house and courtyard could accomodate were invited to be present on the day of the wedding to greet the bride, keep her company during the day, and in hired cars to accompany her on her drive round the town, a tour that marked the conclusion of the festivities and ended at the house of the young pair by the handing over of the bride to the bridegroom. Clad in Kurdish costume, the bride sat in state in the courtyard of her old home from the early morning and [262] [271] received visitors, who were offered tea, cakes and *širbit*, unfermented grape juice. Everything the home possessed in the way of furniture and mattresses was placed in the courtyard and the house was filled with women and children. At about 3 p.m. the bride retired to the house's guest reception [292] [179] room with her sister and some of the other women. That day the whole house was occupied by the women. Here the bride completely changed her clothes, becoming a European "white bride", the

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585 369 [292] [147]

Kurdish ornaments being replaced by imitation jewellery. With the bridal gown of white satin embroidered with sequins went a short, white bridal veil, diadem and bride's bouquet of white paper flowers. Thus bedecked she was placed in a clumsy wooden chair in the middle of the courtyard to be gazed at. The cars should have come at 5 p.m., but were delayed, which was felt as a great disgrace for the whole family. At last the narow alley outside the house was filled with big cars. The one in which the bride was to be was decorated with a red ochre silk cloth on the radiator and silk bands of the same colour tied all round the body so that it looked like a chocolate box. As in the villages, red or reddish-yellow was considered auspicious. [822]

The bride's mother then glided out of the picture and the bride started on her round accompanied by the family's midwife who was to return with the bridal sheet with the proof of the bride's virginity, which was expected before 10 p.m. that evening. All female guests present got into the other cars to follow the bride. [831]

As opposed to the village weddings, where the bride was fetched from her home in the morning by men in cars paid by the bridegroom's family, in the educated milieu she was driven at 5.30 p.m. to the bridal house in a car escorted by women. All the cars were ordered and paid for by the bride's family. During the day the men had been in company with the bridegroom, leaving the house on the arrival of the bride. The women of the bride's home remained at the bridal house. Their presence in the courtyard and the loggia just outside the windows of the bridal chamber, caused the bridal couple to abandon it and to withdraw to the little store room on a bed made on the floor from the extra mattresses intended for sitting on in the loggia and for sleeping out on the roof.

In connexion with the urban milieu wedding, a dinner was given a week later in the bride's parental home for the men of the two families, the bride's father being the host. The women of the house naturally cooked the food, but delivered it to the door of the guest room without entering. As soon as the eating was over the men left the house. The party went on as detached from the women as was technically possible in this urban home. On the same day the newly-married wife paid her first visit to her old home since the wedding, to take a bath and to receive a gift in the form of coins to hang on her necklace, in this case amouting to 42 Din—a kind of reward for having done her family honour. During her stay in her family home she wore a veil over her head in her father's presence. She was "shy", declared her sister. This was, then, a suggestion of an avoidance phenomenon in relation to the father on the part of the newly-married daughter. [931]

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831 684

The importance of virginity. As maintained by several quarters[133], the decisive feature about what, failing a better term, we call the 'wedding', that is to say the consummation of the marriage, is with the Turks, Arabs and Orientals in general the signs of virginity. "If she is not a virgin we must kill her", was my interpreter's laconic answer to my question about her sister, whom I saw sitting in the courtyard in a white European wedding dress. She thus ran the same risk as brides I had seen in the village, who would be killed if the accompanying woman did not return home the visible proofs of the bride's virginity. In answer to my question as to who in given circumstances would carry out the sentence I was told: the brother, the father, the cousin. However, my interpreter added that before

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831 684 the bride was punished for not having guarded the honour of the family—not by her injured husband, but by men of her own family—she would be taken to be examined by the woman gynaecologist to discover whether the lacking proofs of virginity were due to some physical irregularity. It was stated that the metre of white cotton material that comprised the actual, detachable, bridal sheet would be kept by the bride's family for a year as proof for the bride's in-laws if any doubt should be raised about the bride's honour. "About a year" means to about the birth of the first child. After that the bride sheet would be washed and included in the household linen.

585 831 In view of the very definite modesty prevalent among Kurds, and the aversion to any display of nakedness, the lack of modesty when it is a matter of first mating is quite unusually surprising. It is a public affair and must therefore be extremely embarrassing for the young woman; equally painful must it be for the young man who is expected immediately to consummate the marriage and then, his garments adjusted, to leave the field to the waiting woman, who roughly dries the bride's genital opening in order to obtain as clear a trace on the sheet as possible. I heard of no case where a named bride had been killed on her wedding morning.

183 562 684 831 Hay[154] states that with the Kurds the law is very strict as regards the honour of women, but it seems to be the honour of married women that is concerned when he says that "a woman ... who misconducts herself, or, who is suspected on reasonable grounds of misconducting herself, must surely die; and the husband, brother or whoever is responsible for her, who fails to put her out of the way, is considered to have lost his honour, and a Kurd's *nāmūs* or honour is one of his most precious possessions". From what I was told it is only the young, unmarried girls whose honour is guarded by such drastic measures.

In regard to the bridal sheet custom, Nikitine[155] says that is was falling into desuetude as early as 1922, remarking that it is "à son déclin, une coutume consistant à mettre sur le lit des nouveaux mariés un linge blanc ("pyaîr"), qu'on renvoie ensuite aux parents de la jeune femme, comme preuve de sa virginité".

585 831 171 The use of the bridal sheet with the Iranian Lurs is mentioned by Feilberg[156]. That the Arabs kill a young woman who does not pass the test, and that this is done by her own male relatives, is referred to by Dickson[157], though he adds that he has heard of one case where "... the man being chivalrous enough to smuggle into the bridal chamber a fresh piece of meat with blood on it, with which to soil the bed linen ...". To this can be put Nerreter's information about the Arabs as long ago as 1703: that it is seldom that the unfortunate bride suffers, "denn sie wissen Künste"[158].

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595 *Polygamy and divorce.* According to the Coran, provided a man's economic position allows it he may have up to four wives at a time[159], but is obliged to treat them alike and spend an equal amount of time, day and night, with each of them[160].

586 587 The husband has sole right to an immediate dissolution of the marriage by pronouncing *talāq*: "I renounce thee" or, better: "I abandon all right over thee". Until the expiration of the *'idde*-period[161] the wife cannot contract a new marriage, and during this term she is entitled to maintenance[162]. By *talāq* a man can twice divorce himself from his wife but, should he regret his act, can without further

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turban, that it covered head, neck, and face, though the features could be discerned through it. On this occasion it replaced the white or coloured head veil. Nikitine refers to the use of this reddish-yellow veil cast over the head of a Kurdish bride, remarking about the colour: "Le visage de la fiancée est couvert avec une mouchoir rouge pour que ... les jours de sa vie familiale qui commencera soient rouges (c'est-à-dire heureux)"[6]. Although this yellow-ochre veil covers the face, as is also the case with the black face veil (which will be dealt with later), it must not be viewed in conjunction with it. It is a Kurdish variant of the bridal veiling, referred to in respect of Egyptian Arabs by Lane in the middle of the previous century, where, during the procession to the house, the bride, sitting under a rose or yellow-coloured canopy, is covered by a red Cashmere shawl[7], thus clothed quite differently from the accompanying women in their black, silk coverings and white face veils that reach up to, but do not cover, the eyes.

A similar bridal covering is mentioned by Granqvist in the case of Palestinian Arabs[8]. This veil is described as a thick woollen cloth, similar to the ordinary sash, thrown over the bride's head, hiding the face, whilst a caftan hides the rest of the figure. I had no opportunity of discovering whether the ochre-coloured veil was used in the other feminine milieus.

The white European bridal veil. The existence of the short, transparent red-ochre "bridal" veil, used in the humble village milieu, explains perhaps why the short white Western bridal veil could be adopted into the Kurdish dress scheme. When I saw the white bridal veil in use within the mixed educated and uneducated urban milieu (in Sulaimani), all the other women in the escorting cars were closely veiled in black. The difference between the white bride and the other women corresponds to the difference described by Lane between the Egyptian Arab bride and the women in her train[9].

The white bridal veil lacks the red colour of happiness, but the fact that the bride's car is decorated with ribbons of rose silk tied across it and a rose silk cover is sufficient to atone for this deficency. The Kurdish white bride stood out from the rest of Kurdish female dress. However, this is perhaps less a breach of tradition than it appears at first sight, for, apart from the colour the white bridal veil seen in Sulaimani, although it seems incompatible with the close veiling otherwise practised in town, gives the bride an appearance which seems in accord with the village traditions.

The black face veil has been taken over from the Turks. It is the Turkish-Kurdish variant of the woman's veil that has been, and in many places still is, worn outside the home in Islamic areas from Morocco in the west to Afghanistan in the east, from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the north to Aden in the south. In Kurdistan the veil is never worn without an appurtenant over-garment, the Arab *abā* worn as a cowl. I mention this because in Bosnia in 1938 the same Turkish face veil was seen worn alone with a European coat and skirt. In Baghdad, on the other hand the over-garment was worn, but not the veil. By the irony of fate the veil—originally the sign of an honest woman as opposed to a harlot—is now reserved to prostitutes, who are recognised by it[10].

Sure 24, verses 30-31[11] of the Coran are usually considered to form the religious basis for the

852 leader, if he has a son who is being circumcised, to pay for the sons of poor people, and to give the feast. There is thus a tendency for the headman's sons to be circumcised in a common ritual with a large number of boys. This might be thought of as reminiscent of some form of age-grades, and may be vaguely symbolic of loyalty ties within such generations of village boys.

When a child loses his first *deciduous tooth*, a special dish is commonly prepared and given to the neighbors «because the parents are very proud that their child has become so big».

302 883 When a girl feels she is growing up, she may, with a few friends, decide she wishes to be *tattooed*, usually only moderate small designs on face or hands. This is performed by an old woman specialist rarely a resident of the village, but is, everyone insisted, now going out of use as a practice. There is no formal rule as to the age at which this is done, but a girl presuming at too early and age would probably be ridiculed. The controls seem essentially the the same as those on the use of cosmetics in Western society, and the time of tattooing does not correspond to puberty in any one-to-one relation as a rite de passage.

• 585 *Marriage* is one of the most exciting festivals of the village, and usually takes place in the autumn after the harvest, to ensure plentiful supplies. The process of choosing a spouse has been discussed above (pp. 26 ff.) — the ceremony itself is most colorful in the case of marriages that connect two villages, since then the aspect of conspicuous exhibition of wealth is most stressed, and the bridal procession from the girl's to the husband's home most impressive. The celebrations should traditionally last three days, and involve all one would expect of eating, smoking, and dancing, offering opportunities for all kinds of informal social activities. Unless excessive factionalism interferes, the whole village takes part in the festivities.

765 *Death.* After a death, the members of the bereaved household remain at home for three days, and friends and relations come visiting, express their sympathy, and are served food and tea. After three days, the throats of two or three sheep are cut, in honor of the deceased, and the meat is «given to the poor» — that is, distributed

8: Leach E-5 (1938) 1940 MA11 Kurd MA11
Rowanduz

765 of cigarette papers. The scale of entertainment naturally varies
574 greatly with the status of the deceased; moreover the death of a male is
491 in every case far more serious than the death of a female. So far as I am aware the ceremonial commiseration is similar in the case of commoner families though on a smaller scale.*

The Mulla

793 The Mulla has his part to play in the ritual both on occasions
• 585 of marriage and death, and gains some appropriate reward. His interest
431 in the marriage ritual is on the decline. Government regulations now require that marriages must be registered with the police, and the marriage is legal without any religious ceremony. The tendency is therefore to give presents to the police rather than the Mulla.

* The above remarks do not apply at all to nomad tribes; I was told that among the Herki the whole ceremonial is concluded in one day. The procedure was said to contain much ritual of non-Moslem type.